



Speech by

**Hon. ANNA BLIGH**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE**

Hansard Tuesday, 4 September 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Water Infrastructure

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (9.58 am): Since the parliament last met there has been significant and very welcome rainfall in the state's south-east. This has had a positive impact on our dam storage levels and even as late as yesterday slight inflow increases were still being observed. Currently, our combined dam storages are at 20.21 per cent. When the House last sat, dam levels were just above 16 per cent. There is also more rain forecast for this week as well. SEQWater estimates that these new inflows mean we could have an extra 4.5 months supply in our dams.

This is naturally most welcome and the prayers of many have in part been answered. But the drought has not broken. The Queensland Water Commission's latest projections is that dam averages are now expected to be 10 per cent in December 2008 rather than heading towards five per cent, as had been projected before the unseasonal August rain. In the meantime, we are progressing rapidly with our major drought-proofing and long-term water projects.

The \$9 billion south-east Queensland water grid has well and truly progressed from engineering plans, earth moving and hard physical slog to reality with the delivery of the first water. Since we last gathered in the House, the Premier and I on Monday, 27 August witnessed the delivery of the first water to the Swanbank Power Station. Swanbank Power Station is now Queensland's first power station to be supplied with recycled water. On Sunday I was very pleased to join the Premier to officially open the Bundamba 1A advanced water treatment plant. The Premier and I were there to charge our glasses of recycled water to toast the success of this great project and thank the many workers who have slogged away to build this vital piece of infrastructure. They have worked so hard despite the constant criticism that they have had from those on the other side of this House—

**Mr Springborg:** You could have had it seven years ago but you stopped it.

**Ms BLIGH:** I note the interjection from the member who was the water minister seven years ago under the former Borbidge government who, as I recall, approved no water infrastructure during his time.

The official opening marked an enormous engineering achievement. Just 10 months ago the Bundamba site was a paddock. Since then there has been 39,000 tonnes of reinforcement steel put in place, 103,000 cubic metres of earth moved, 18,000 cubic metres of concrete poured and 90 kilometres of electrical cable put in place. We now have a world-class facility producing some of the best grade recycled water in the world.

I would like to put on the parliamentary record my thanks to these workers and particularly to the Bundamba advanced water treatment plant construction director, Mr Gus Atmeh. Anyone who has been out to the site knows that Gus is very enthusiastic about this project and very happy to show visitors around the site. If members doubt the size of this construction project, I ask them to consider the fact that in those 10 months the workers at the Bundamba site have gone through more than 30,000 burgers and 82,500 cans of soft drink.

Progress on the remainder of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project is on schedule, as is the southern regional water pipeline on schedule and the desalination plant at Tugun on the Gold Coast. Just to update the House on the progress of the other projects, as of late last week more than 120 kilometres of pipe had been laid. These significant achievements are important to the security of water in this region. As I say, we need to be very mindful of the work that is going into them.

Since the parliament last sat we have also had the release of another monthly water report. There are no major changes in the Queensland Water Commission's report. Also, the Premier has made mention of how the Sunshine Coast and Gympie areas received heavy late unseasonal August falls as well. Between 24 and 30 August, more than 91,200 megalitres of water was recorded as flowing past the Dagon Pocket Gauging Station. Dagon Pocket Gauging Station is about 2.5 kilometres downstream of our proposed Traveston Crossing Dam site. It is a very good indicator of the stream flows at the site. At the rain event's peak, the daily flow rate was more than 42,000 megalitres.

In the weeks beforehand, the flow rate was in the order of 20 megalitres a day. So it went from a flow rate of 20 megalitres a day to 42,000 megalitres a day. That meant that the flow rate was rushing past at a rate that would fill an Olympic sized swimming pool every five seconds. I heard the member for Gympie parroting some of the rubbish that has been peddled about the rain that was received, describing it as a one in a hundred year event. That is true. On my advice it has been about 100 years since that river has seen those flow rates in August. It has not happened in August before. But as the Premier outlined this morning, in the last 49 years it has happened in 23 years. In my view, it is time for bipartisan support for this dam and I encourage the leaders on the other side to show some leadership on it.

**Mr Seeney:** Don't hold your breath.

**Ms BLIGH:** No, I will not hold my breath waiting for leadership from the other side. That is a very good point from the Leader of the Opposition, and I take it.